

CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA
Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

STAFF REPORT

Hearing Date/Agenda Number
P.C. 10-22-03

Item No. 3.b.

File Number
PDC03-046

Application Type
Planned Development Rezoning

Council District
9

Planning Area
Willow Glen

Assessor's Parcel Number(s)
414-06-002

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Completed by: Dipa Chundur

Location: Southside of Curtner Avenue approximately 630 feet westerly of Bascom Avenue (620 Curtner Avenue)

Gross Acreage: 1.02 Net Acreage: .92 Net Density: 16.3 DU/AC

Existing Zoning: County Existing Use: One single-family detached residence

Proposed Zoning: A(PD) Proposed Use: Up to 15 single-family attached residential units

GENERAL PLAN

Completed by: DC

Land Use/Transportation Diagram Designation
Medium Low Density Residential (8.0/DU)

Project Conformance:
☒ Yes ☐ No
☒ See Analysis and Recommendations

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

Completed by: DC

North: Single-family houses/Church R-1-8 & R-1-5 Single-family residence

East: Single-family houses and Hotel Unincorporated & CP Commercial Pedestrian

South: Condominiums A (PD) Planned Development

West: Apartments R-M Multi residence

ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

Completed by: DC

☐ Environmental Impact Report found complete
☒ Negative Declaration circulated on October 3rd 2003
☐ Negative Declaration adopted on

☐ Exempt
☐ Environmental Review Incomplete

FILE HISTORY

Completed by: DC

Annexation Title: CAMBRIAN 32

Date: Pending

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION

☒ Approval
☐ Approval with Conditions
☐ Denial
☐ Uphold Director's Decision

Date:

Approved by: _____
☐ Action
☒ Recommendation

OWNER

CONTACT

K. Naderzad
Recon Development
P.O. Box 3209
Saratoga, CA 95070

Que Nader
Recon Development
P.O. Box 3209
Saratoga, CA 95070

PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED**Completed by: DC**

Department of Public Works

Memo Attached

Other Departments and Agencies

N/A

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

None received

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Que Nader of Recon Development, is requesting a Planned Development Rezoning of approximately 1.02 gross acres from County to A (PD) Planned Development Zoning District to allow up to 15 single-family attached residential units. The site is also the subject of a pending annexation (Cambrian #32).

The subject site has one existing single-family house, built in the 1950's and a few associated accessory structures. All structures are proposed to be demolished. The site is flat with a very deep, rectangular configuration (107' x 404'). The site includes 22 trees all of which are non-native and some that are ordinance size.

The surrounding uses consist of residential condominiums to the south, two story apartments to the west, single-family houses and a church across the street to the north. The property abuts a single-family house and the rear side of a hotel to the east.

Project Description

The proposed project consists of a total of 15 single-family attached residential units arranged in building clusters of 3 to 5 units each. All of the proposed units have two-stories with attached two car garages and private rear yards. The units have three bedrooms and range in size from 1,523 to 1,923 square feet each. All units will take access from a private driveway off Curtner Avenue. A total of 10 guest parking spaces will be provided including six on the site and four along the curb in front of the project.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Negative Declaration was circulated on October 3rd, 2003. The primary environmental issues that were addressed included the tree protection/mitigation and noise attenuation.

Trees

There are 22 existing trees on the site. Seven (7) of these trees, including two very large Monterey Pines are proposed to be saved. A total of 15 trees are proposed for removal of which eight (8) are ordinance size. Most of these are multi-trunk trees with poor structure or in poor condition. Mitigation for the loss of the existing trees will be provided in accordance with standard City policies.

Noise

A noise report was prepared for the project by Environmental Consulting Services, dated July 8, 2003. Mitigation measures as identified in the report will be provided to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning to reduce traffic noise impacts from Curtner Avenue to meet the General Plan noise standards. Additional mitigation will be provided to minimize construction related noise impacts.

GENERAL PLAN CONFORMANCE

The proposed project, with a net density of 16.3 DU/AC conforms to the City of San José's adopted San José 2020 General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Medium Low Density Residential (8 DU/AC) under the use of the Discretionary Alternate Use Policy (Two Acre Rule). One of the goals of the General Plan is to encourage infill development, which may require innovative design solutions on some constrained sites. Under this discretionary General Plan policy, projects located on sites of two acres or less in size may be developed at a higher or lower General Plan density range. The appropriate density should be determined based on compatibility with surrounding land uses. Projects developed under this policy should be of exceptional design and exceed minimum design standards and guidelines.

In this instance, this project site provides an appropriate transition from the single-family houses located to the east and the higher density apartment structures located directly next door to the west. The project maintains a generally "single-family" appearance, by placement of just a single unit with a traditional front porch facing Curtner Avenue. Other unique design features employed in the proposal makes this project suitable for consideration of the use of the Two Acre Rule (see analysis for addition discussion about the project design).

A development proposal at a density of 8 DU/AC could only construct seven (7) dwelling units. Using the Two Acre Discretionary Alternate Use policy allows the proposed project to double the number of proposed dwelling units without requiring a General Plan Amendment.

ANALYSIS

The key issues analyzed as part of this project include: 1) neighborhood compatibility and site design, 2) conformance to the Residential Design Guidelines, and 3) architecture.

Neighborhood compatibility and site design

The proposed project is compatible with the surrounding land uses. Existing surrounding development along Curtner Avenue is typified by apartment buildings. There is, however, a mix of existing single-family houses throughout the area, including next door to the east. The site plan was designed to maximize the building separation between the single-family house on the east side and the proposed units. The separation is achieved by locating the main private driveway between them. The project's

entry drive takes advantage of two large existing pine trees, which will be preserved. These are located at the edge of the right-of-way and just inside the project.

The driveway meanders within the project to add visual interest and to avoid a view down an otherwise long driveway. A unique private driveway cross section with an integrated sidewalk and rolled curb is proposed to meet the 20-foot wide access requirements of the Fire Department, but also provides a desirable looking narrow appearance with an intimate neighborhood scale. Parking is not allowed along the side of the driveway. The end of the driveway is designed with a hammerhead to meet the fire and emergency access and turn-around requirements.

To accommodate the desired driveway configuration, three custom units, with a narrow configuration are proposed closest to Curtner Avenue. These include tandem garages to enable the placement of the project entry driveway along the side property line near the adjacent house. The rear two-thirds of the site includes the use of a wide/shallow unit design that helps to minimize the dominance of garage doors and to maximize the length of the landscape edges along the private driveway. A more typical row house design would generally have resulted in a long row of units placed along one side of the driveway. Such single-loaded projects (units on just one side of the street/driveway), particularly when a project has more than about half a dozen units, do not generally exhibit the best sense of neighborhood since units do not look out towards other units within the development.

The project is able to utilize slightly smaller rear setbacks, which are appropriate, given that the adjacent uses are made up of less sensitive uses such as a hotel and a parking lot for an apartment complex. At the rear of the site, the proposed setback matches that of the taller, adjacent three- story condominium development.

Conformance to the Residential Design Guidelines

The proposed project substantially conforms to the requirements and intent of the Residential Design Guidelines. The project provides adequate parking and private open space. Common open space is not required for projects with fewer than 20 units.

This project, defined as a row house per the RDGs, should ideally have units facing out onto an actual public street rather than a driveway. However, given the relatively small size of the project and existing site constraints of the relatively narrow, deep site, the private driveway is acceptable and consistent with past approvals for smaller projects.

Architecture

The architectural design of the individual units is well articulated. The project has been designed to provide an appropriate transition between the single-family house on one side and the existing apartments on the other. There is only one unit, with a substantial front porch element facing the Curtner Avenue that provides a single-family house appearance.

All of the units have two stories. The exterior walls will be clad with stucco. Flat concrete tile is proposed for the roof. The varying roof elements, porches, garages, doors and windows are well integrated architecturally to achieve good visual interest. Further refinement of the details will occur at the Planned Development Permit stage.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Notices for the public hearings and environmental review were distributed to the owners and tenants of all properties located within 500 feet of the project site. Staff was available for answering any comments or questions.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends approval of the proposed Planned Development Rezoning for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project, with a net density of 16.3 DU/AC conforms to the City of San José's adopted San José 2020 General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Medium Low Density Residential (8 DU/AC) under the use of the Discretionary Alternate Use Policy (Two Acre Rule).
2. The project is in substantial conformance to the Residential Design Guidelines.
3. The project furthers the objectives of the City's policies toward infill development policies
4. The proposed project will be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

Attachments